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NEW FORCES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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I

In 1866 a certain clergyman in New York wrote a discourse to which he gave this characteristic title: "Christian Education the Remedy for the Growing Ungodliness of the Times." The production won in its day sufficient fame to be preserved as a pamphlet in the Harvard Library; but there it has long remained unsought, its presumptions of finality dependent at last, for even a bare reading, on some whim of historical curiosity. One need not so much as glance at the discourse to know why it lies, with many a like effort, quite forgotten. The title tells the story of its dogmatic temper, its easy ignorance of ends and means, its lack of insight into childhood. The point of view is naïvely, comfortably, loftily external: it recognizes no great problem in its subject, no need for new data, new thought, new purposes. Discourses of that sort are not written now—or, if written, not preserved.

With every year, to be sure, far more is printed on the same general topic than was ever printed in the sixties. Even the inattentive lay reader cannot escape contemporary discussion of religious education; but the modern discourses are of a new kind. The *Poole's Index* list of magazine articles under Religious Education shows this growth and change with striking concreteness. Beginning in 1802, the *Index* for eighty years includes only fifteen references to the subject, all of which are serenely general in character. "Religious Education for the Masses"; "The Religious Education of a Family"; "The Religious Education of Children," these titles fairly represent the kind of treatment which this topic inspired during the nineteenth century. The record in the *Index* for the four years beginning in 1902 offers a sharp contrast. There are thirty references under Religious Education, and of these a large majority bear titles which

show that they are scientific in temper. They are intensive studies in the history or the principles of religious education, or formulations of definite problems in its theory or practice. These titles are characteristic: "Religious Education before the Reformation"; "The History of Religious Education in the Public Schools of Massachusetts"; "The Need of a Professional Consciousness in Religious Education"; "The Philosophy of the New Movement for Religious Education"; "The Place of Action in Religious Education;" "Scientific Aspects of Religious Education"; "The Relation of Religious Education to Science."

Here is a strong current of popular expression; and beside it runs a slighter but increasing stream of more technical production. The source of both lies probably as far back as 1882, when G. Stanley Hall brought out in the *Princeton Review* his article on "The Moral and Religious Training of Youth." Since that time the scientific study of religious education has progressed slowly, but steadily. *The Pedagogical Seminary*,¹ a Clark University publication, has produced from time to time studies such as Barnes's "The Theological Life of a California Child," some of which have been very profitable. In 1904 President Hall founded *The American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, which is now in its ninth issue and which has already had occasion to welcome to its field a German magazine of like character. Although the *American Journal* has published more studies in religious psychology than in religious education and has been throughout somewhat too narrowly the organ of a school, it has performed the important service of bringing before educators, in a dignified way, the problems of religious development in the child. A certain number of books devoted wholly or chiefly to the scientific study of religious education have also appeared: in Hall's *Adolescence* (Appleton, 1907), Horne's *Philosophy of Education* (Macmillan, 1904) and *Psychological Principles of Education* (Macmillan, 1907), the theme is central; and it is the exclusive concern of Coe's *Education in Religion and Morals* (Revell, 1904), Crooker's *Religious Freedom in American Education* (American Unitarian Association, 1903), Haslett's *The*

¹ See vol. i, no. 2; vol. ii, no. 3; vol. iii, no. 3; vol. vi, nos. 2, 3; vol. vii, no. 2; vol. viii, no. 4; vol. xv, no. 2.

Pedagogical Bible School (Revell, 1903), Burton and Mathews' *Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School* (University of Chicago Press, 1903), Dawson's *The Child and his Religion* (University of Chicago Press, 1909), and of two collections of essays, *Principles of Religious Education* (Longmans, 1900) and *The Child and Religion* (Putnam, 1905). There are besides a few books of less importance on the general subject, and a number of Sunday-school guides and manuals which have a temporary practical interest; but the books here named present the deeper problems of religious education and point the direction of its future progress. Professor Coe's volume is by far the most profitable of them all.

The chief record of recent advance in the study of religious education, however, is yet to be mentioned, namely, the *Proceedings*² of the Religious Education Association. In these we have five volumes of constructive discussion covering every phase of religious nurture and teaching, the worth of which it would be difficult to appraise too highly. They present the views of leaders in the school, the church, the Sunday-school, the university, and in life, and they offer at once a body of invaluable data as to problems and tendencies and a collection of workable programmes for practical education in religion. Under the quickening influence of the Association, other bodies, such as the Unitarian Sunday-school Institute at the Isles of Shoals, report yearly more and more profitable discussions.

It is plain that men are thinking more earnestly about religious education than ever before, and in a new way.

This renaissance is not, however, a mere matter of study and discussion. There is increasing evidence of larger and more effective practice and of a new attitude and new purposes in the work. Half of the twenty-four million children of school age in the United States are enrolled in Sunday-schools, and if this in itself signifies little, the wide-spread effort to improve the work of the schools signifies much. That effort is not hard to illustrate.

² The Improvement of Religious Education; The Bible in Practical Life; The Aims of Religious Education; The Materials of Religious Education; Education and National Character. (The Religious Education Association, 72 East Madison St., Chicago.)

Within a brief period and in various quarters, the items which follow have successively borne witness to some new aim or some new method in the practice of the Sunday-school—and the number of such concrete details could be multiplied almost indefinitely: the Church of the Disciples in Boston pays all its Sunday-school teachers; President George A. Coe of the Religious Education Association has been called to a new chair of religious psychology and religious education in Union Seminary, New York; the Cuyahoga Sunday-school Association of Cleveland, Ohio, has issued an announcement of plans for the training of teachers; St. Paul's Universalist Church, Chicago, although small, has undertaken a good programme of graded activities and courses; the Senior Course of the Bible Study Union (Blakeslee) series of lessons deals with missions; the Committee on Religious Education appointed by the Presbyterian General Assembly favors, among other things, a comprehensive scheme of educational activity for the churches, to include "courses in missions and courses in civic problems and service"; vacation Bible schools were conducted five days a week last summer in Boston, Providence, Albany, and Pittsburg.

These are random gleanings from a single field, signifying a new mode of attack and greater accomplishment. From the work in other fields one gains a like impression. Much educational activity outside the Sunday-school has always been essentially religious in spirit and purpose, as, for example, the work of the Young Men's Christian Association and kindred institutions. In this work of late the broader outlook and the greater zeal have been plain to all. There is about it a new freedom and a new practicality based on a new approach to its goal in the religious life. The religious training given in colleges and private schools, whether denominational or not, has shown the same changes. From all sides comes the evidence that religious educators are dealing at last with the whole problem of human development, struggling at close range with the dynamic forces of human nature, in order to unify them in religious insight, faith, and devotion. This is the very essence of the new movement.

One great means of making religious education more effective is as yet, to be sure, hardly more than foreshadowed in practice.

When the new forces shall have done their full work, the simplest and most convincing mark of their presence will be this, that all secular training will be turned to account in the religious life. The public school is now avowedly secular, and the home has given up much of its responsibility for religious development in the child; but these facts will mean to the new religious education only an added opportunity. The religious teacher will see that specialization of functions has merely given to him the larger task. It is his to lay hold of all that is elsewhere accomplished for good and to organize it into an inclusive religious consciousness centred in a devoted will. For so important an educational duty a special institution will always be needed, but more than any other institution it must secure, and know how to use, universal coöperation.³ The Sunday-school is actually attempting to make itself worthy of this central place; but the more difficult task remains of securing in every agency for secular education a sense of its duty to the ideal of religious development. School subjects can be so taught, school discipline can be so administered, that the dominant spiritual attitudes demanded by religion shall be reinforced, not weakened.⁴ Every phase of the child's nurture and the youth's training can contribute something toward the development of a religious consciousness, and this without warping education from any of its normal channels.⁵ Much may be done by clubs and associations not directly affiliated with either church or school,⁶ and many distinctly secular agencies (for example, the library, the college fraternity, the social settlement, the playground) may help by special means to give physical, intellectual, and social training their due value as parts of the larger education of the spirit.⁷ Here is a great practical problem of coördina-

³ Cf. G. Stanley Hall, "Relation of the Church to Education," *Pedagogical Seminary*, vol. xv, no. 2, and William D. Parkinson, "School and Church," *School Review*, September, 1905.

⁴ Cf. P. Hughes, "Types of Religious Attitude," *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, vol. ii, no. 2.

⁵ Cf. L. H. Gulick, "Religious Aspect of Group Games," *Pedagogical Seminary*, vol. vi, no. 2.

⁶ Cf. W. B. Forbush, *The Boy Problem*.

⁷ Cf. the numbers of *Religious Education* for 1909-10.

tion, towards the solution of which only a little has here and there been done.

But that anything has been done at all—or even that the ideal has been so much as conceived—is an indication that religion and education stand now in a new and promising relation. Their aims have been so broadened that they harmonize and interpenetrate. This is the meaning of the new movement: religious education has been redefined in terms of human development. Educational institutions and activities whose aims once seemed indifferent or even repugnant to religion are now seen to be pursuing the very purposes of religion itself;⁸ and institutions and activities once so religious as to ignore or slight education are now pursuing educational ends in the conviction that only thus can religious ends be attained. Thus missions, always wise in this respect, are more than ever placing their religious work on an educational basis and conceiving their religious task in educational terms.⁹ And the church itself begins to recognize that the religious life it fosters must needs include every worthy aim of education. In short, the modern practice of religion everywhere implies and includes education, and in the modern practice of education it may no longer be said that any part shall not be in effect religious.

It is evident that men are working more earnestly for religious education than ever before, and with a new outlook.

These facts have a possible significance of the very highest importance. In themselves they are encouraging; but seen in their relation to the traditional modes of the religious life they become even prophetic. Too often one hears it said that the church is losing its power over the lives of men. Fewer candidates present themselves for theological training; congregations do not grow as they ought; there is an excessive expenditure of effort and an almost shameful ingenuity of appeal in securing financial support; new sects and faiths are evidence of religious unrest, etc., etc. But in the face of these doubts about the older

⁸ See the address by Professor F. G. Peabody in *Religious Education* for April, 1909.

⁹ See the survey by Professor E. C. Moore in *Religious Education* for October, 1909.

forms of religious activity, men are interested in religious education to an extent hitherto unknown and in ways that are altogether new. The church as a whole may need to readjust itself to changed conditions; in its educational department it does not need to readjust itself so much as it needs to recognize and use its own new power. And this fresh life is not induced by fears for the church; even if the church were proved to be in danger of instant dissolution, this movement could not be ridiculed as a frantic attempt to revive it. The leaders here are not all churchmen, and even the churchmen approach the work quite as often from the side of the school, the home, the state, or the child, as from the side of the church. Times have been ungodly before this without any such result. There have been great revivals through appeals to the adult conscience, such as the Methodist revival of the middle of the eighteenth century; there have been mighty schemes for religious education established in the interest of the church, such as the opposing systems of Luther and the Jesuits; but when has there been any such disinterested concern in the child himself as a religious being, and in his complete religious development? The dream of Comenius, of Francke, and of Froebel seems almost ready to be realized.

Who can limit the part this new interest shall play in the divine comedy? If the church is destined to come successfully through her present trial as a social institution, may she not owe to the new forces in religious education no small part of her victory? And if that far dearer triumph of the religious ideal is ever to be won, wherein the daily lives of men shall prove at last that a common faith in God can make us brothers, to what forces will that moving faith be due so largely as to these? Never before, at any rate, has religious education promised the results it promises today.

II

To speculate about these larger effects of the new movement would by no means be a waste of time. But although ultimate ideals must always be our final standards in education and the remoter outcome of our effort becomes in consequence the source of our chief inspiration, the data for judging the worth and the

direction of our actual work lie nearer home. I turn rather, therefore, to the immediate causes of the new movement, its present alliances, its most salient characteristics, and its nearest aims.

Important reforms cannot be explained by reference to changes in the external conditions of life; their deepest causes lie in the hearts and minds of men: but no movement is quite an unrelated occurrence, and to understand the special features of a change in one field we must often take into account the changes in fields that seem perhaps remote. The half-century just preceding the rise of the new movement for religious education was marked by great changes in many fields, with a general tendency towards specialization of social functions and unification of social purposes. A few of these changes, it is clear, have affected very directly, and still affect, the progress of religious education.

The first of these is the change in the position and power of the home. Without any attempt to retrace the steps in this process, which elsewhere have been fully described,¹⁰ it is sufficient here to recall the fact that the American home has given up one after another of its specific responsibilities. The home undertakes fewer tasks than ever before. By this I do not mean that there are more homes of wealth and leisure, or that the amount of work to be done in support of a home is less; I mean that no home has the variety of concerns it once had. Specialists do the work that used to be done by the parents in the home, and parents in turn are specialists outside. Economic details are too obvious to need recounting: what home today is independent of the department store? Nor need I do more than mention the weakening of home responsibility in many of the more personal concerns of life, such as health and education. Our whole social organization, indeed, has become less genetic, more individual: churches no longer count their membership, as a matter of course, by families; the state no longer, as in early colonial days, leaves education to the family; we are beginning to take away from the family the responsibility for the very condition of its children's eyes and ears and teeth.

¹⁰ See chapter i of *The School and Society*, by John Dewey, University of Chicago Press, 1900.

The resulting problems, all important, range from manual training in the school to the economic and political status of women. Of course religious education has not escaped unaffected. Religious nurture is not carried on in the modern home to that extent and with that skill which Horace Bushnell, half a century in advance of his time, saw to be desirable. The temper, the conditions, and the limitations of the modern home are all against it. Accordingly, the new religious education is based at the outset on the admission that the specialist must undertake religious education, as he has undertaken secular education, and must bring to it a professional consciousness equally trained.¹¹

This requirement is even now not totally unfulfilled, as some of the facts cited above may show, and causes other than the one just described combine to strengthen it; but another requirement, seemingly dissimilar, has arisen in intimate connection with this one. With many voices proclaiming that home responsibility has been generalized unduly, or even disastrously, has come the attempt to restore to the home some of its old specific obligations.¹² The Third International Congress for Home Education, for example, meets this year at Brussels under the auspices of the Belgian government. The discussion and activity due to this reaction have not, however, been directed against specialization as such. No one has tried to make us forget that division of labor means a better product. No one has denied that we are better in health since we have given up dosing at home and rely wholly on doctor's orders; that we are better educated since the state has taken full responsibility for our schooling; nor that similar effects should follow from expert leadership in religious education. Everyone admits that the work of religious education is complex and difficult; that it demands organization, skill,

¹¹ The Proceedings of the Religious Education Association continually emphasize this need. In May, 1908, the Council of the Association issued a call to colleges and universities to provide in their departments of education special training in religious pedagogy.

¹² Coe, *Education in Religion and Morals*, p. 282 ff.; *Proceedings of the Religious Education Association*, vol. i, pp. 108, 117, 122 ff.; vol. ii, pp. 21, 46, 51 ff.; vol. iii, pp. 67, 333 ff. Also, on the general question of home responsibility, Joseph Lee, "The Integrity of the Home a Vital Issue," *The Survey*, December 4, 1909.

material, and above all a direct and powerful social imperative which the home, lacking numbers, cannot supply. The real object of the reaction and its best result has been the recognition that an important part of the expert's work must be the stimulation and conservation of home influence as a specific contribution to religious development. The centre of effort has shifted to the Sunday-school and allied institutions; the home has less to do and is no longer the leading power: but the final burden of support still rests upon the home, and there can be scant success if the home does not coöperate.

Modern religious education, then, must do outside the home much that was once done in it, and must, besides, secure the intelligent coöperation of the home itself. These requirements are indeed correlative, and they point to a principle of unity in religious education which is highly important. It is fatally simple to educate children by parts. Because a skilful Sunday-school teacher can keep a class comparatively quiet through a prayer and some responses, and can get them to learn some Bible stories and a text, the school may rest content with a superficial success which hinders in the end that wholeness of life which vital religion prescribes and produces. Religious education must aim to affect life deeply throughout its whole extent; it cannot be a matter of the mind alone, nor of the heart, nor of good deeds; it cannot confine itself to a single institution nor to a narrow range of habits. Its only success is in the enthusiastic, intelligent, active dedication of all human powers to the divine purpose expressed in ideals. The necessary conditions of an achievement so profound are the central position of the agency that attempts it and its ability to coördinate to its uses every influence that bears on the child's development. If in this matter the new movement has almost everything yet to do, at least it sees clearly the direction in which it must work.¹³

It is natural to consider next a process which may be called a direct influence on the development of the present status of religious education, viz., the evolution of the public school. For this discussion, the great outstanding fact about the public school

¹³ See almost any number of *Religious Education*, but especially the issue for April, 1909.

is that it is thoroughly secular. Practically speaking, the problem of explicit religious instruction in the state-supported schools of America is settled. It is still discussed, and ably,¹⁴ but the discussion affects practice hardly at all. Whatever the public school may yet do for instruction or training in morality, officially, at least, it can do nothing towards the teaching of religious belief and very little towards engendering religious emotion or religious habit. That it can do its own work in ways which strengthen the hands of the teacher of religion I have already intimated; and that the teacher of religion must in turn endeavor to utilize secular instruction and training I have urged as essential: the fact to be noted here is that the secularization of state schools has rendered only the more inevitable the result brought about by the weakening of home responsibility,—specialization and expert leadership in religious education.

A second change in general education during the last fifty years has affected religious education more deeply, if less obviously, than the secularization of the schools. The early nineteenth century saw a radical reconstruction in educational theory, which has since had the most momentous results in educational practice. The "New Education," to be sure, has been lightly ridiculed, idly condemned, and ignorantly attacked; and it has also been sincerely misunderstood by those who are loyal to older ideals and would judge by these the product of the new. And the reform has suffered much, besides, from injudicious friends. But no one who has traced its rise through sincere thinking and eager self-sacrifice can treat it lightly; no one who has followed in its development the interplay of the great insights and enthusiasms of the century can condemn it idly; no one who knows the story of its gradual but certain triumph can be satisfied to judge it from without or by measure. Its inspiration is of that same source whence modern democracy and modern science draw their power: it can no more fail than they. Problems of many sorts it has left, to be sure, unsolved; but it has set us in the right way to solve them, and one central principle, at least, it has established beyond attack.

¹⁴ Pro: The California Prize Essays on Moral Education, Ginn, 1908. Contra: Crooker, Religious Freedom in American Education. The German system is frequently reported and discussed in educational magazines.

That principle is best called, I think, the principle of development. The somewhat barbarous term "self-activity" was applied to the central form of it by Froebel, chief expounder of its pedagogical applications, but the word development shows more clearly its manifold relations. For this doctrine in pedagogy is but one aspect of a many-sided conception, as the reform in which it has been applied is but the educational phase of a far more comprehensive change. It represents in education a mode of thought that has come into possession of the whole field of human interests. The scientific doctrine of evolution represents, of course, its most conspicuous triumph, and through the theory of recapitulation has had direct bearing on educational thought. But the habit of thinking in terms of development did not originate in science, and has not been confined to science. Montesquieu, Winckelmann, Lessing, Herder, foreshadowed in the eighteenth century and in non-scientific subjects our present evolutionary point of view; and long before the scientific theory had been established, a developmental mode of thought had been introduced into philosophy and theology through the doctrine of the immanence of God. In our day psychology, including the psychology of religion, has profited most by the conception of development. The historical method of study in every field, with the whole apparatus of research, is also one of its outcomes. Nor is it difficult to trace the influence of this mode of thought in the victory of democracy: Rousseau's cry, "Back to Nature," little as it indicated a correct conception of a natural state, did indicate a great new faith in the forces which guide the life of man, and in this faith the whole principle of development is implied.

For the principle of development everywhere forbids an external point of view. It demands of us with respect to human life that humility which the scientist displays towards nature. Not that it asks us to accept human life as it is;—our own ideals, themselves the strongest of all factors in the development of man, are of the highest significance for our guidance: but it asks us to study human nature as it is, begin with it as it is, trust its essential forces, and guide them to worthy expression rather than attempt to repress them or substitute others. It

insists that progress cannot result from conformity to outward standards, but must come finally through new sensibility to values, through new purposes, through insight and ideals.

The point of view of the new education, therefore, is always from within. It studies children to determine their normal powers, their normal interests, their normal processes of growth; in formulating its programs of study it endeavors to do no injustice to the natural life of childhood. And it teaches children by inductive, active, and inspiring methods; it does not try to make instruction interesting in order to make it easy or agreeable, but it tries so to gauge the work to the child that the possibility of real achievement and the successful exercise of creative power shall engender self-sustaining interests and permanent purposes.

Towards this point of view the schools have been progressing for over half a century, until at last it begins to dominate their work. And this point of view religious education has now adopted. When one remembers the Calvinistic opinion expressed by Jonathan Edwards that "young children are vipers and worse than vipers" in the sight of God, it is not surprising that religious education should have been tardy in adopting the idea of development; nor is it surprising that religious education should now be even more insistent upon it than secular education is, seeing that the fundamental principle of the divine immanence has at length won general acceptance in modern theology. Be that as it may, the new religious education finds the primary sanction for its work in its belief that there are in children natural impulses which may be guided into religious expression, natural needs which may be satisfied in the religious life, natural tendencies which may be developed into religious purposes. It accepts the necessity of graded instruction, inductive methods, and continuous expression of religious motives, feelings, and ideas in forms appropriate to each successive stage of growth. Modern religious education believes that the religious life can be fostered only by progressive development from within.

One corollary, perhaps I should say one aspect, of this principle has sometimes escaped even its most ardent advocates. Froebel

made it as important in his educational philosophy as "self-activity" itself, but the adequate recognition of it in the schools is a matter of the last few years, whereas "self-activity" has been recognized for at least a generation. I mean the social aspect of development. When one conceives growth as a process of accretion, the individual may readily be conceived as a collection of powers or faculties and society as a collection of individuals; but when one grasps the idea of development, it is no longer possible to avoid a more organic view both of the individual and of society. The result is at once a more social view of the individual. The development of the individual is seen to depend upon his entering into the great relationships of life. Education becomes, therefore, preparation for effective and significant living as a member of society; it has in view at every stage the social use of knowledge and power; it teaches languages, literatures, arts, and sciences not as bodies of dead fact to be acquired for personal adornment, nor merely as products of individual genius to be mastered for private enjoyment, but as social products, media of social communication, to be mastered and acquired by methods which will strengthen social-mindedness, to be known and enjoyed in ways that will not prejudice social living, to be used for social ends. There are many indications that this point of view is becoming steadily more effective. It is prominent in modern educational writings¹⁵ and such movements as that for industrial education are signs that the modern school is fast becoming an institution for the social direction of individual development.¹⁶

Of course the public school is not the only field in which the social aspect of development has been applied, nor is educational theory the only subject in which it has been recognized. The comparative study of religion, of art, of literature, of law, all mark a recognition of the fact that no man liveth unto himself alone, that no nation liveth unto itself alone. And that no man shall live unto himself alone, even as much as he can, is the avowed

¹⁵ Witness such recent titles as Henry Suzallo, *The School as a Social Institution*; Colin A. Scott, *Social Education*; Paul Natorp, *Sozialpädagogik*.

¹⁶ For a survey of progress from this point of view see the "Report of Educational Progress," *Proceedings of the Harvard Teachers' Association for 1909*, *School Review*, May, 1909.

purpose of a host of modern organized activities, charitable, civic, cultural, political, religious. Religion shows the social spirit of the time perhaps as strongly as any interest of man, for whereas it once appealed to each man to save himself, it now appeals to him to save others; whereas it was once satisfied with negative, individual holiness, it now demands an active social purpose—devotion to the kingdom of God on earth.¹⁷ It is not surprising, therefore, that the new religious education recognized the social aspect of development as soon as it recognized the principle of development at all. Once our theology had regained the idea of an immanent God, it was not long before our religion began to regain the social purpose of Christ; and when theology and religion were found to be in accord with pedagogy and with life, religious education was bound to set for itself a social aim and adopt a social method.

As the new secular education proposes to prepare the individual for fuller and more serviceable membership in the family, in civil society, and in the state, so the new religious education proposes to prepare him for fuller and more serviceable membership in the mightiest community of all, the brotherhood of a divine humanity. Religious education is preparation for conscious and effective membership in the church invisible to which all inevitably belong, whose service is service of the common life through loyalty to ideal causes. As the larger relationship includes the smaller, so must religious education include secular education; in other words, it must strengthen the social influences of secular education and give them final sanction and direction. Further, it must make the ultimate relationship effective by means of all the others, and in turn effective in them; in other words, it must use loyalty to the family, to society, to the state, as stepping-stones to loyalty to God, and must see to it that loyalty to God means increased devotion to every lesser human duty. Modern religious education takes as its aim the complete and effective development of a social consciousness in the individual.

¹⁷ A. C. McGiffert, *How may Christianity be Defended Today?* Hibbert Journal, October, 1908.

III

The main features of the new religious education, viewed in the light of the influences that have affected it, are, then, these: it is to be an education under special and expert leadership, but it is to be widely inclusive in the scope of its interests and activities; it is to base its whole effort on the natural characteristics of children and is to guide their growth by self-expressive and creative methods, but it is to take its direction from a thoroughly social aim. In outlining the influences which have contributed to these results I have made central certain marked changes in the home and in the school, which from a pedagogical point of view seem, indeed, to have been especially important; yet it has been impossible to avoid references to science and government, to literature and art, to philosophy and theology, for the changes in these fields have also had important effects on the new movement. Of continued influences from the field of theology the rest of this discussion must take still further account, since the bearing of theology on religious education is closely connected with the topic I propose now briefly to consider, viz., the relation between the Sunday-school and the church.

It is not too much to say in general that the Sunday-school has oftenest been considered as a mere adjunct to the church, its function that of a recruiting station. If other views of its place and office have now and then found expression, none have been widely accepted. It will readily be supposed that the new movement stands on the contrary for a far broader view of the Sunday-school. The Sunday-school, it declares, is to prepare children for a religious life, and in a religious life church observance is only one element.¹⁸ The church and the Sunday-school must be conceived as integral parts of a single educational institution,¹⁹ the power of which will be conditioned, to be sure, by the number of persons it can reach, but the success of which

¹⁸ G. A. Coe, *Religion as a Factor in Individual and Social Development*, reviewed in the *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, vol. i, no. 3; also in *Proceedings of Religious Education Association*, vol. i, p. 45.

¹⁹ See E. M. Fairchild, "The Function of the Church," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. ii, no. 2.

must be judged eventually by its effect upon their lives. The church exists for the Sunday-school, as well as the Sunday-school for the church; and both exist for the religious life, which extends far beyond either.

In the practice of the Sunday-school the consequences of this view of its place and function are varied and important. The curriculum must be graded; extra-biblical material must be freely used; there must be more hand-work, more active and dramatic expression, and more concrete embodiment of religious ideas and emotions in deeds; hymns, prayers, and responses must be adapted to the pupils, sometimes chosen by them or even composed by them; in short, every detail of the work must be such as will aid in the development of a religious life that is real, powerful, inclusive of every spring of action and every worthy relationship, progressive, and self-sustaining.

It is obviously impossible to discuss all these points here. I turn instead to a problem, not named above, which involves the relation of theology to religious development, and which at the same time brings up in a new light the whole question of the bond between the church and the Sunday-school. It is the problem of teaching a creed.

If creeds have been almost universally disparaged in our day, they have not suffered a lonely martyrdom. Every product of the pure intellect has been humbled. "This voluntaristic age" has taught ideas their place: they are instrumental. Evolutionary psychology, social psychology, pragmatism, and the American temperament have combined to give final worth to the concrete, to deeds. Religious psychology has lisped in its infancy what the elder psychologies have more maturely spoken, and our faith in the human efficacy of creeds, especially as agents in religious development, has been severely shaken.

Now much that religious psychology has accomplished must be conceded to be permanent. The conception of religious development worked out by one school of religious psychologists²⁰ is to most minds so much more comprehensive, searching, stimulating, and practicable than anything else we have

²⁰ I mean such writers as Coe, Starbuck, and Oosterheedt. They do not form a school in any literal sense.

had, that it is likely to stand at the very least as our best working hypothesis. This conception makes religious education no training of a special sense or faculty, nor an initiation of youth into an esoteric experience, nor the expression of feeling and desire through isolated and unusual channels, nor the attainment of a strained and unnatural view of the world. It looks upon religion as a life lived with reference to an inclusive relationship. As filial piety is the product of the family relationship and may be expressed in any one of the ways in which men express themselves at all; as patriotism is a product of the state-relationship and may engage the whole range of a man's powers,—so religious thought, religious emotion, and religious purpose are expressions of religion as the relationship of man to God. If this relationship has characteristic modes of expression, it is none the less inclusive of all others and regulative of them. The religious psychologists who decide from the returns to a *questionnaire* that religion is the special interest of a limited class are performing a somewhat misleading service. It has been known for some time that a good many people are not religious, as it has been known that a good many are not patriotic, or dutiful, or cleanly. The question that interests us is, Can they be made so? Of course, if sense experience does really exhaust the truth, and God is not the universal father who commands us through our own ideals, then we shall be wise to look upon religion as an interesting psychological phenomenon occurring functionally in a limited number of people, and we shall not waste time in the endeavor to develop every child's "religious nature." But if we are willing to risk our lives on the belief that "things are not what they seem," we shall insist that religious insight, religious sentiment, and religious loyalty are eternally valuable to every individual; that the religious attitude is essential to individual and social development; that the religious life is normal. This is the conclusion of the only religious psychologists who have done much practically helpful work.

It is evident that this conclusion makes the value of a creed in religious development depend upon the general value of intellectual conviction in life. The dictum that religion depends

but little upon creeds is thus only one way of saying that life depends but little on thought; and it seems probable that this view has been more or less over-emphasized of late. No doubt men have set too great store by intellectual systems—particularly false ones; no doubt they have too easily regarded them as established; no doubt, above all, they have been mistakenly zealous to force them ready-made on the mind of youth: but all this does not lessen the value of thinking as a means of interpreting life and so of guiding it. If ideas are only instrumental, at least they are that. As very highly valuable instruments we must continue to use them, in religious education as everywhere else. Thinking is a fundamental mode of living, and theologizing a fundamental mode of thought. If its products must be tested by life, they are not the less precious; and the church that really believes in its creed will not consider its educational aim accomplished until it has convinced its pupils of its important truths.

Yet the attitude of the modern church towards its creed is, of course, and must be, very different from the older attitude. Today the church emphasizes essentials and broad practical consequences, not special doctrines and fine theoretical differences; it urges the faith as a support and an incentive, not as a duty; it bids men take it with them into the world and live by it, but it does not condemn them if they cannot believe. And in expounding the creed it takes to heart the ancient psychological insight—he that doeth the will shall know of the doctrine. It tries to keep the formulated belief fresh and meaningful and vital by uniting it with such depths of experience as originally gave rise to it, and by applying it concretely to the guidance of life.

This view of the modern church with respect to the uses of formulated belief in adult life has made easier of acceptance the new view with respect to the teaching of creeds to children. Catechisms can no longer be dogmatically taught and mechanically memorized with the expectation that the ideas they contain will discharge the high office of interpreting experience and guiding conduct. Doctrines, the church admits, must help in the organization of life; a creed must be central, organic, re-

freshing itself forever as it illuminates and is illumined by the moving forces of the heart and mind. That no creed can be thus held whose truth is not whole and clear and compelling is here beside the mark; the important thing to be noted is that the modern view of the creed makes it absolutely essential that it be properly taught.

Here, then, is the crux of the matter: How shall the creed be taught so that it shall be vitally held? Has the new movement a well defined message here? Apparently it has, but not an exhaustive one. No one can lay down the whole law on the teaching of religious truth, because the problem has not yet been solved. A few principles, however, the new movement has made clear, and of these one at least brings out in a striking way the relation which the new movement proposes between the Sunday-school and the church.

In the first place the new movement believes that dogmas as such should not be taught to young children at all. The beliefs which an adult can grasp intellectually must be presented to children by means of symbols, which touch the imagination. And even so, the greatest care must be exercised in choosing the symbols, so that literalism shall not spoil their imaginative appeal nor fable be taught as fact.²¹ In the second place the new movement has made it clear that children must be led to act in the spirit of a belief long before that belief is presented to their understandings. And their action must be as varied and as significant to them as it can be made, so that it shall really establish the predisposition which the creed is later to crystallize in formulas. Finally, the new movement insists that when doctrines are eventually taken up as such, they be presented not as fixed and unshakable truths, but as vital problems with which every youth must struggle in his own mind and which he must ultimately solve for himself. Although the embodiment of these principles in Sunday-school practice is far from complete, and even unanimity of opinion upon them is not quite attained, they yet represent the main trend of thought and effort in the Sunday-schools of the new movement.

²¹ There is an admirable discussion of this point in Blow's *Educational Issues* (1909), chap. iii.

And they mean, especially the last one, that the church must risk its creed for the sake of making it effective over the whole range of life. The sort of instruction in the creed which cramps and narrows the intelligence, binding it to forms, producing faithful but unreasoning followers, must be abandoned. The church must not seek primarily to increase through the Sunday-school the number of its adherents, but to make life more significant to those it now trains and to render them more intelligently loyal to ideals. If it will thus deliberately lose its own life, can it be doubted that it shall find it?